(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to amend the Article 124 of the Constitution for empowering the Executive with the rights of selection, appointment and transfer of Chief Justice and Judges of High Courts and Supreme Court;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the details of progress made so far in this regard; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) In its 14th Report of "Reform of Judicial Administration" (1958), the Law Commission had recommended that "The practice of appointing the senior-most puisne Judge of the Supreme Court as the Chief Justice of India, is not desirable. Instead, the most suitable person whether from the court, the Bar or from the High Courts should be chosen" The Government then decided that the recommendation should be accepted and that the appointment need not go to the seniormost Judge if another Judge was considered more suitable.

(c) to (f) The Government decided to introduce a Constitution Amendment Bill in Parliament to make changes in the existing system of appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court, Chief Justices of the High Courts, Judges of the High Courts and transfer of Judges of the High Courts. The draft Constitution (Eighty-Second Amendment) Bill, 1997 has accordingly been circulated to members of Lok Sabha.

[English]

Chari Committee Report

5514. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Minister has since examined the Chari Committee report on integrated coal policy; and

(b) if so, the Government's reaction to some of the salient features of the Chari Committee recommendations particularly the survival strategy for State Units in decontrolled regime?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government have considered the Chari Committee Report on Integrated Coal Policy and have decided as follows:-

(i) Deregulation of the prices and distribution of D grade of non-coking coal, hard coke and soft coke with immediate effect.

(ii) Allowing Coal India Limited (CIL) and the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) to fix the prices of E, F and G grades of non-coking coal till 1st January 2000, once every six months by updating the cost indices as per the escalation formula contained in the 1987 report of the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices.

(iii) Allowing CIL and SCCL to fix the prices of E, F and G grades of non-coking coal in relation with the market prices and to distribute these grades of coal after the 1st January, 2000.

(iv) Subject to legislative approval, the setting up of an independent body to monitor detailed and regional exploration of coal and lignite resources in the country;

(v) Subject to legislative approval, the allocation of new blocks on the basis of a competitive bidding process in which Indian companies including nationalised coal companies may participate;

(vi) Subject to legislative approval, the establishment of a Regulatory Body which would perform an appellate function to resolve the price disputes between the producers and the consumers.

Integrated Infrastructural Development Project

5515. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Orissa Government has submitted any proposals for setting up of Integrated Infrastructure Development Project at Khurda, Paradeep and Rayagada;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether no formal sanction of funds for IID centre at Khurda has yet been issued;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the time by which the formal sanction of funds for IID centre at Khurda is likely to be accorded; and

(f) the remaining proposals likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The Government received a proposal for setting up of Integrated Infrastructure Development Project at Khurda which was sanctioned on 20.6.96.

(c) to (e) The Central Government has not released any funds because the State Government is yet to complete the requisite formalities. The Small Industry Development Bank of India has sanctioned a loan of Rs. 296 lakhs.

(f) No proposal is pending with the Central Government.

Industrial Production

5516. SHRI B. L. SHANKAR: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the target of Industrial production fixed for 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) whether the target has been achieved during 1996-97;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to achieve the target for 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e) Though no target for overall industrial production was fixed for 1996-97 overall industrial growth was expected to be in double digit. As per the information available the overall industrial growth in April-January, 1996-97 was 7.5%. Deceleration in industrial growth has been mainly due to under performance in crude petroleum, power, fertilizer and consumer durable sectors. Sector specific strategy has already been initiated to remove the constraints in the under performing sectors. The Credit Policy announced recently by RBI is also expected to provide further impetus to industrial growth. Government has also proposed initiatives in Union Budget, 1997-98 for accelerated industrial growth.

[Translation]

Artificial Yarn

5517. SHRI N. J. RATHWA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) Whether there has been decline in the export of artificial yarn from the States including Gujarat particularly from the tribal areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for this decline; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to increase the export of artificial Yarn?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) and (b) State-wise export statistics are not maintained. However. India's overall exports of rayon filament yarn have declined from Rs. 105.34 crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 65.68 crores in 1996-97. The decline is mainly attributed to production constraints, inter-alia due to the problem of pollution.

(c) Government have been taking a number of steps to boost export of taxtile items, including rayon filament yarn, which include encouraging exporters to participate in buyer-seller meets, fairs and exhibitions; enabling import of capital goods at concessional duty for export production; special arrangements for duty free import of raw materials for export production; ensuring increased availability of export credit etc.

Export of Textiles

5518. DR. BALIRAM: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed for the export of textiles during 1996-97;

(b) whether this target has been achieved; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the facilities being given to exporters to encourage the export of textiles?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) A target of US $ 11,800 million had been fixed for the exports of textiles (including handicrafts, jute and coir) during 1996-97. The achievement against the target has been US $ 11839.13 million (provisional).

In order to boost the exports of textiles, Government have been taking a number of steps, which include encouraging exporters to participate in buyer-seller meets; fairs and exhibitions; enabling import of capital goods at concessional duty for export production; special arrangements for duty free import of raw materials for export production; ensuring increased availability of export credit etc.

Production of Core Industrial Sectors

5519. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ:

JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been decline in the production of core industrial sector in the country during 1996-97 as compared to the previous year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reaction of the Government to the effect on the general industry as a result of decline in the production of the core industrial sector in the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Six infrastructure industries, viz., electricity, coal, crude petroleum, saleable steel, petroleum refinery products and cement registered a growth of 3.2% during 1996-97 as compared to a growth of 7.9% in the corresponding period of last year. The decline in the production of infrastructure sector has been due to under performance in mainly crude petroleum and power sectors.

(c) Development of a strong economic infrastructure in sectors like power, transport and communication is considered critical for sustained industrial growth. The extensive application of market mechanism in these sectors through de-regulation of production and distribution is expected to provide added stimulus. Foreign investment in these sectors is also encouraged to supplement domestic resources. An Infrastructure Development Finance Company with an authorised share capital of Rs. 5000 crores, has also been set up to finance infrastructure projects.

[English]

Coal Mafia

5520. SHRI ANANT GUDHE: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state: